



WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER COP THAT...

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ABOVE THE LAW?

AS SUSSEX HUNT MONITORS SUFFER VIOLENT ATTACKS

Now nobody with any sense really expected the boys in blue to really start cracking down on their red-coated chums after the hunt ban but the case of the South Down and Eridge hunt* really takes the biscuit.

**(SchNEWS' local as it happens – based just outside Lewes)*

This year has seen two co-ordinated masked attacks on hunt monitors following the Eridge fox-hunt. The first, on the opening meet of the season saw four sabs beaten by a masked gang of ten men. Their camera which they say had gathered evidence of illegal hunting was stolen. Initially police refused to do anything but eventually arrested one man on the day. Two others were arrested later. However the investigation was bungled with the investigating officer initially denying any knowledge of the video of the attack and later after viewing it claiming it had no relevance.

Just two weeks ago the monitors who had been assaulted learned that all charges had been dropped against those arrested – apparently on the grounds that a photo of one of the hunt thugs had previously appeared on the Brighton Hunt Sabs Facebook page.

For a long time the Eridge were a kind of old ladies hunt – hideously vicious to any wildlife they chanced across of course but often bizarrely affable towards 'antis'. That changed with the arrival of David and Carolyn Fuller – who became joint masters of the hunt shortly after the Hunting Act 2004 technically made their past-time illegal. Huntmasters are, as the name suggests, in charge of the financial affairs and day to day running of the hunt – they're not to be confused with hunt servants who do the actual nasty business with the hounds and the fox. With the Fullers at the helm the South Down and Eridge became increasingly aggressive towards hunt monitors with numerous incidents of violence reported.

The hunting act, if nothing else, evened the playing field between sabs and the hunt – now the hunts had to pretend to abide by the terms of the act – at least while they were on camera. Hunts have tried various tactics to deal with this, claiming to be involved in exempt hunting or laying a conspicuous trail which isn't then followed by the hounds. In fact the almost total lack of interest shown by police forces across the

country in enforcing the ban has meant that most hunts haven't had to try very hard to pretend they're not hunting animals for sport. There's one niggle that won't go away though – evidence gathered by independent monitors is increasingly being used to successfully prosecute hunts. One way of keeping that footage from even being filmed of course is to employ gangs of thugs to attack and intimidate those who take it.

But surely gangs of masked men attacking individuals, leaving them needing stitches and then stealing their cameras is something that police would simply have to act on? Maybe not - if those orchestrating the attacks are or were police officers themselves.

AN ERIDGE TOO FAR?

David Fuller runs a company called Just Cool It Ltd . In the blurb he boast "JCI was established in 2007 by it's Managing Director David Fuller following his retirement from Sussex Police after thirty years service. Using his twenty years of skills as a Detective Sergeant, David has applied his commitment and professionalism into the refrigeration and catering hire sector" - Now if that doesn't send a shiver down your spine

then the next item on the menu will. David's wife Carolyn Fuller (albeit under her maiden name Peate) runs Countryside Catering . SchNEWS had a quick squint at their client list. Funnily enough they managed to secure contracts with Sussex Police.

As one Brighton Hunt Sab put it "How can Sussex Police ever try and claim any amount of impartiality when it comes to dealing with and investigating hunting and hunt related violence, whether it be to our wildlife or the people trying to protect it. Something REALLY stinks in Sussex and it's not what they spread on the fields."

Onwards to Boxing Day – the most prestigious date in the hunting calendar. Sabs had bravely ventured back to the South Down and Eridge who meet in the centre of Lewes. The nature of the ground at this meet meant that the sabs and their vehicles were separated for most of the day. Towards the end of the afternoon a gang of seven balaclavaed men attacked one of the sab land rovers, while it was stationary smashing the windscreen and beating the driver with sticks before stealing his iPad and the vehicle keys.

One arrest was made on the day and SchNEWS anticipates that Sussex Police will of course investigate the offence as thoroughly as they would any other conspiracy to violent robbery, without fear nor favour as to who their old mates might be.

Tally Ho!

For more see: <http://southdownhuntsabs.wordpress.com/>

BEXHILL UPDATE

RELIEVE THE NINETIES AND JOIN A ROAD PROTEST

The tree camp on the route of the Bexhill Bypass has expanded. More treehouses and a tunnel have been made on the first site and a second area has been occupied with treehouses.

If you fancy having a go then there's training in climbing and direct action over this coming weekend (5-6th). Tree cutting contractors are expected to start work again on Monday the 7th, after having a fortnight off for Christmas; before the festive season got into full swing, there were up to twenty-five security protecting just a couple of chainsaw operatives doing the felling.

The campers would love more people, climbing equipment, camp kitchen stuff and more. See the wishlist on www.combehavendefenders.wordpress.com.

Please bring a tent and sleeping bag if you can. Also see the website for the new camp ground-rules, which include no drinking on site.

Locals from the village of Crowhurst have come out to show their support and there's

ample wood and other materials for new tree houses and benders.

But stopping the Bexhill link road could only be the start: this is the first of over 190 roads planned by Cameron and co.

Giddy Osborne has recently given the green light to an orgy of roadbuilding as a supposed means of 'kickstarting' the economy and 'driving' Britain forward into a gloriously prosperous debt free future.

Yes, forget the digital 'knowledge economy' and increasing homeworking, peak oil and climate change - what we really need is... more tarmac!

But its surely nothing to at all do with the influence of any of George's nefarious friends in the powerful, financially generous pro-road lobby who now stand to cash in on the construction bonanza.

So, if you can't make it to Bexhill, don't worry, there'll be a new road nearer you on the way soon...

PARTY & PROTEST

For events listings updated weekly see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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DONE FOR A TON

Four anti-nuclear protesters were fined £100 each and given 12 months conditional discharge on December (19th) in Taunton magistrates' court. The four had chained themselves together and blocked the main access outside the Hinkley power plant in November (SchNEWS 832). The blockade stopped entry and exit onto the site for over four hours until a removal team arrived from nearby Bristol. In court the four pleaded guilty to obstructing the highway.

The action raised awareness and protested against the plans for reactors at the Hinkley C nuclear power station site in Somerset. Whilst the condition discharge now restricts those involved from being active, a statement from *The Stop Hinkley* website after the verdict was defiant: "This is a national campaign and I expect there will be many more surprises for EDF over the coming months.

Barnaby Hodges, a catering worker from Glastonbury, said outside court: "I have never been arrested for protesting before, but like many people in Glastonbury I am ready to take whatever non-violent action is necessary to prevent the building of a potential Fukushima only 25 miles away. It's not as if there aren't any alternatives."

There might be a small respite for the protesters as recent cutbacks at EDF's parent company in France could mean long delays for the nuclear building programme. EDF has indicated for over a year now that it plans to spend billions on two reactors at the new plant at Hinkley. Confirmation is expected in March 2013 but with pressure from the French government to cut costs at the parent company the confirmation date might be pushed further away still.

KEY TO RESISTANCE

One group of workers in Spain has come together to stick a spanner in the works of austerity misery. Or more specifically, in the locks.

After a disastrous year in which 50,000 families were evicted from their homes after defaulting on mortgage payments – and a spate of eviction-related suicides – locksmiths in the city of Pamplona have called a halt to their part in evictions.

The decision was taken three weeks ago at the first meeting of the Assembly of Professional Locksmiths of Pamplona (the city more famous for allowing drunken idiots to flee angry bulls). It was the only item on the agenda and was unanimously approved. Locksmith companies have seen a vast increase in the rate of evictions; from one a month to around three a week.

Explaining their new stance, locksmith Iker de Carlos said: "We're people and as people we can't continue carrying out evictions when people are killing themselves... We know that we will not start a revolution, but we want to serve as an example to Navarre [the region] society on how to fix an unfair situation."

The national Union of Security Locksmiths are also (partially) refusing to be the banks' lackeys. The union of 300 member companies, and more than 2,000 workers, have now stopped cooperating in evictions in some circumstances. Among those they are boycotting are situations where entire families, the elderly, young children and disabled people would be kicked onto the street.

In times of crisis it's nice to see a bit of humanity/class solidarity. If only the Sitex workers in jobsworth Britain would give their spanners a rest.

XMAS CHEER FOR ELF

ELF activist released after seven years imprisonment.

Seven years ago Daniel McGowan was arrested in the US for his alleged involvement in two arsons in Oregon in 2001 that were both claimed by the Earth Liberation Front. Prior to the events of 9/11, the Earth Liberation Front were publicly considered by the U.S authorities to be the number one domestic terrorist threat in the United States. The group worked in anonymous separate cells targeting ski resorts, lumber companies, SUV dealerships and Forest Service Ranger stations causing millions of dollars worth of damage in defence of the wilderness.

McGowan was charged in federal court on counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy. The arsons in question were against two privately owned companies Superior Lumber in Glendale, Oregon and Jefferson Poplar Farms in Clatskanie, Oregon. Jefferson Poplar had been selected as an ELF target because it was believed it was involved in genetic research by growing a hybrid variety of poplar-cottonwood trees that would help timber companies replace the region's old-growth forests with commercial tree farms.

After his arrest Daniel McGowan was given a stark choice - to co-operate with the authorities (rat) or stand trial and possibly spend the remainder of his life imprisoned (he was initially looking at rather stiff 335 years imprisonment).

He chose the latter. Opting for a non cooperation plea agreement he plead guilty on November 9th 2006. His case was part of Operation Backfire, the code-name for the operation against 'eco-terrorism'.

He has spent the last four years incarcerated in two experimental prison units, known as Communication Management Units. These units basically restrict communication between prisoners and the outside. Part of the CMU system means inmates are not allowed physical contact with others during visits. They can only talk for mere minutes a month to loved ones. According to the American government CMU's are for those prisoners with "inspirational significance". They are meant to ostracise political prisoners like McGowan from the outside world and the movement that supports them. McGowan was released and put in a half way-house on December the 11th, he will stay there for a few months and after that he will be under supervised release for 3 years.

...and finally...

So here we are again, January. Our arbitrary dating system throwing up its annual 'ooh look, another year gone' moment.

And what did we learn from 2012? The world didn't end as the Mayans never really predicted. The total failure of the free-reign capitalist system just 4 years ago (and still ongoing of course), followed by a huge political public funding swindle to keep those in power in power and make everyone else pay for generations for doing so... still fails to stir up any serious agitation or desire for political change amongst the masses. Well how could it when we've had things like the Jubilympics, a new James Bond movie, Google nexus, celebrity paedo-factor strictly come rumour-mongering...

But never fear, SchNEWS has come up with a way to really awaken the masses from their slumber. In 2013 we're going to do all protesting gangnam style.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all drivers, if you're on a road to nowhere, take a left turn into oblivion. Honest!

ICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN

The preparations are in place for the 9th round in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary against Sea Shepherd and the Japanese Whaling fleet. Operation: Zero Tolerance officially began on November the 5th as the Steve Irwin departed from Williamstown, Australia; it is Sea Shepherd's ninth season in Antarctica on the campaign's mission to stop the Japanese whaling fleet. The real action though will not start until the defenders and poachers meet.

Sea Shepherd have named this campaign – Operation Zero Tolerance and it represents its biggest campaign to date against Japanese whaling. The Whale's Navy has a fleet of four ships, one helicopter, 120 international crew, small boats and even drones. The name of the campaign indicates the group's plan to send the whaling fleet home without a single whale being killed.

In past campaigns Sea Shepherd's tactics and direct action saved the lives of more than 3,600 whales and helped expose illegal Japanese whaling. The Japanese whaling industry is sinking and had been especially since commercial whaling was banned in 1986, yet it carries on due to government pride and massive subsidies. Hopefully with Japan's whale-meat industry struggling to stay afloat and in millions of debt it will not be long until it will become unable to continue.

Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands and the United States had recently expressed concern over activities in the Southern Ocean and the safety risks incurred as the two sides clash. This concern led to Sea Shepherd issuing an invitation to those four countries. They are all cordially invited to send a representative on the Sea

Shepherd ships whilst they are at sea and see for themselves.

The Japanese government's Fisheries Agency announced on Friday (28th) that the whaling fleet has departed for the annual hunt. This year's fishing quota is up to 935 Antarctic minke whales and up to fifty fin whales. The fleet is composed of the factory ship Nisshin Maru, two harpoon ships and a security ship. The whalers are weeks behind their usual departure time. "With the Coast Guard on board and the all vessels underway it appears that they are finally leaving," said Paul Watson. Watson said he did not expect the whalers to reach the Antarctic until 21 January at the earliest. Sea Shepherd believes the whaling fleet was waiting for the ruling from an injunction before departing.

Last week on Tuesday (18th) the Japanese whalers had the United States 9th District Court issue an injunction against Sea Shepherd. The injunction orders Sea Shepherd to stay at least 500 yards away from the whaling vessels. The preliminary injunction had previously been denied in February 2012 by a different judge. Now it was granted by three judges of the 9th circuit without a hearing. In effect a Japanese company got a United States Court to issue an injunction against Australian and Dutch vessels with an international crew, operating in international waters, when already the Japanese whalers are breaking the whaling ban.

Sea Shepherd founder and Captain stands firm despite international pressure; "We will defend these whales as we have for the last eight years – non-violently and legally," said Paul Watson.

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